

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 02003 110420Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /087 W
-----065985 120009Z /65

R 110400Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9804
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, KS
SUBJECT: 33RD KOREAN LABOR DAY

SUMMARY: ROK'S LABOR DAY FOR 1978 FOUND ALL THE ACTION,
INCLUDING STRONG PROPOSALS FROM FKTU AND UNPRECEDENTED FLOOR
DEMONSTRATION BY SMALL GROUP OF WORKERS, AT FKTU'S
CEREMONIAL GATHERING. MEANTIME, UIM'S EXPECTED MEETING APPARENTLY
FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. END SUMMARY.

1. MARCH 10, KOREA'S 33RD LABOR DAY, BROUGHT SOME SIGNS OF
CHANGE, EVEN TO THE STANDARD COMMEMORATIVE MEETING. THIS
CEREMONY, SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE FEDERATION OF KOREAN
TRADE UNIONS (FKTU) AND THE ROKG'S OFFICE OF LABOR AFFAIRS
(OLA), WAS ATTENDED, AS USUAL, BY PRIME MINISTER CH'OE
KYU-HA; KU CHA-CH'UN, MAYOR OF SEOUL; AND THE MINISTERS OF
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND HEALTH AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS, ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF APPROPRIATE
COMMITTEES OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, PRESIDENT OF KOREAN
EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION (KEA), GENERAL SECRETARY OF JAPAN'S
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02003 110420Z

DOMEI, AND ALL PRESIDENTS AND SOME FIVE THOUSAND MEMBERS OF
FKTU'S SEVENTEEN MEMBER UNIONS. FIRST UNUSUAL EVENT WAS
THAT PM CH'OE (AND ENTIRE CABINET-LEVEL ENTOURAGE) STAYED
THROUGH THE ENTIRE CEREMONY, INSTEAD OF LEAVING AFTER THE
PM'S SPEECH.

2. AFTER SPEECHES, FKTU ADOPTED A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS,

CALLING FOR ROKG A) TO ESTABLISH MINIMUM WAGE SYSTEM, SO THAT LOW WAGES WILL BE ELIMINATED, B) TO ESTABLISH THREE-PARTY (LABOR-MANAGEMENT-GOVERNMENT) WAGE POLICY COUNCIL, DIRECTLY UNDER PRIME MINISTER, C) TO ROOT OUT ALL ILLEGAL LABOR PRACTICES, D) TO ESTABLISH A MINISTRY OF LABOR, AND E) TO PROVIDE MEASURES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS TO BE RELEASED AS RESULT OF WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND TROOPS. FKTU NEXT ADOPTED TWO MESSAGES, FIRST (ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT PAK), EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR HIS CONCERN FOR WORKERS, WHILE ASSERTING THAT THERE ARE STILL VICIOUS EMPLOYERS WHO MIS-USE EMERGENCY LABOR MEASURE, AND SECOND (ADDRESSED TO WORKERS), STRESSING NEED FOR UNITY AMONG WORKERS.

3. DURING HIS SPEECH, FKTU PRESIDENT CHONG TONG-HO WAXED EMOTIONAL IN PORTION APPEALING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF TRI-PARTITE WAGE POLICY COUNCIL. HIS EMPHASIZING THAT THIS COUNCIL SHOULD BE PLACED DIRECTLY UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER LED AT LEAST ONE SEASONED OBSERVER TO INTERPRET THIS AS INDIRECT OBJECTION TO WAGE COUNCIL WHICH RIKG HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN OLA, APPARENTLY ON BASIS THAT THIS IS IMPLEMENTIVE LEVEL, RATHER THAN LEVEL AT WHICH POLICY IS MADE. CHONG ALSO ADVOCATED THAT WORKERS BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN MANAGEMENT AND SAID THAT THE LABOR UNIONS WOULD PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN POLITICS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

4. GREATEST SURPRISE WAS SCENE PRECIPITATED DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 02003 110420Z

CHONG'S SPEECH BY SOME TWENTY YOUNG GIRLS SEATED AMONG MEMBERS OF AUTO WORKERS' UNION. THEY AROSE FROM THEIR SEATS, FLOURISHED BANNERS WHICH THEY HAD CONCEALED IN THEIR CLOTHING, AND SHOUTED SOMETHING. CONFUSION SPREAD FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, AS POLICE AND FKTU GUARDS BODILY REMOVED DEMONSTRATORS. SOME OTHER UNION MEMBERS SHOUTED PROTESTS WHEN GUARDS BEAT SOME OF GIRLS IN PROCESS OF EJECTING THEM. FKTU PRESIDENT CHONG CONTINUED TO DELIVER HIS SPEECH DURING FRACAS, HOWEVER, AND GIRLS WERE TOO FAR FROM ROSTRUM WHERE EMBOFFS WERE SEATED FOR THEIR BANNERS TO BE LEGIBLE OR THEIR SHOUTS INTELLIGIBLE. EMBOFFS HAVE SINCE BEEN TOLD THAT GIRLS, WHO WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY PLICE, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NOT YET FORMALLY CHARGED, WERE FROM THE TROUBLED TONGIL TEXTILE PLANT IN INCHON. WHERE UIM IS INVOLVED.

5. AT POINT IN PROCEEDINGS JUST BEFORE CLOSING CEREMONY, FKTU PRESIDENT CHONG TOOK ROSTRUM AGAIN WITH AN "URGENT MOTION". REFERRING TO EARLIER DISTURBANCE, HE ATTRIBUTED IT TO WORKERS WHO HAD BEEN MISLED BY THOSE "IMPURE ELEMENTS" (PULSUNHAN SERYOK) WHO CONTINUALLY CHALLENGE THE FKTU AND BY "FORCES WHICH MASQUERADE UNDER THE NAME OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES" (CHONGGYO HWALTONGUL KAJANGHAN

SERYOK). POINTIN OUT THAT FKTU HAS HITERHTO RESTRAINED
ITSELF FROM CRITICIZING THESE ACTIVITIES, CHONG ASSERTED
THAT "NOW IS TIME TO TAKE A STAND", WHICH MOTION WAS
PASSED BY ACCLAMATION. THIS MARKS FIRST TIME THAT ANY
OFFICIAL OF FKTU HAS OPENLY VOICED OPPOSITION TO RELIGIOUS
INVOLVEMENT IN LABOR AFFAIRS, ALTHOUGH CHONG DID NOT
MNETION BY NAME ANY ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE URBAN
INDUSTRIAL MISSION (UIM).

6. MEANWHILE, PARALLEL ACTIVITIES EMBASSY HAD EXPECTED OF
UIM OR JOC APPARENTLY FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. EMBASSY
OBSERVER VISITED TONGDAEMUN CATHOLIC CHURCH AT TEN A.M.
ON MARCH 10, PLACE AND TIME RUMORED FOR UIM GATHERING, BUT
NO ONE ELSE APPEARED. SOURCE AT MYONGDONG CATHERDRAL SAID
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PAGE 04 SEOUL 02003 110420Z

RESTRICTIONS THERE WERE SO TIGHT THAT NO ONE COULD THINK OF
MOUNTING STREET DEMONSTRATION SUCH AS WAS DONE IN 1977.
ONLY ACTIVITY ON PART OF DISSIDENTS WHICH EMBOFFS
DETECTED WAS TEN O'CLOCK GATHERING AT KNCC OF THOSE WHO HAD
BEEN CONFINED TO THEIR HOUSES LAST MARCH FIRST. WHAT
"COUNTERMEASURES" THEY MIGHT AGREE ON WERE UNKNOWN AS OF
NOON, FRIDAY.
SNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, LABOR DAY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL02003
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780110-0148
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780379/aaaacond.tel
Line Count: 144
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bec518c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3360788
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 33RD KOREAN LABOR DAY SUMMARY: ROK'S LABOR DAY FOR 1978 FOUND ALL THE ACTION, INCLUDING STRONG PROPOSALS FROM FKU AND UNPRECEDENTED
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bec518c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014